

17th November 2020

Dear parents,

We recognise that this is a challenging time for our pupils. Darker nights, coughs and colds, the lowering of energy levels, combined with the threat of Covid-19 and possible feelings of uncertainty surrounding the GCSE Examinations 2021 are just some of the difficulties that our young people currently face.

However, despite all these challenges, our pupils continue to do their very best every day and are learning to face challenges with increased positivity and conviction. From completing algebraic problems, to writing extended essays, we continue to see good progress in learning. It was wonderful to be able to share some of our pupils' success stories with parents last week as we delivered our parents' evening remotely and even more encouraging to hear from yourselves what a difference our provision is making.

Remembrance

We remember and thank everyone whose service and sacrifice help ensure a safe and peaceful world today.

On Wednesday 11th November we came together as a community to remember the service and sacrifice made by our forefathers and to remind ourselves about our responsibilities to encourage peace and reconciliation. We thought about what remembrance means for us today during the Coronavirus pandemic, and how the service and sacrifice of nurses, doctors, armed forces and community volunteers helping at foodbanks, for example, helps make our communities safe, saves lives and protects our freedom in times of crisis.

We compared this to Air Raid Wardens giving time to go and work in the local community, putting themselves in harm's way; volunteers, Armed Forces, Medical staff leaving loved ones behind to go and fight and defend freedom for everyone, and the Armed Forces fighting on the frontline with the risk of being killed in WWI and WWII. Some sacrifices were 'bigger' than others, but they all counted towards defeating the enemy and winning the war.

Within the centre, pupils celebrated Remembrance Day by observing a 2-minute silence, exploring the importance of poppies - the symbol of remembrance, making Flanders Fields, analysing propaganda posters and exploring the reality of life in the trenches. The day culminated with pupils completing a research project on a family member who has served in a war.



This week we are raising awareness of anti-bullying with a particular focus on looking after one another's wellbeing and valuing individuality. Throughout the week, pupils will take part in a range of activities and lessons to raise awareness of what bullying is and further develop strategies to report or deal with it. This will include keeping safe online and cyberbullying.



Pupils used 'Odd Socks Day' on Monday as a way of supporting wellbeing and celebrating individuality.

Miss Cox, with the help of our pupils, is busy designing a 'wellbeing' room – a place where students can go if they be feeling overwhelmed.

With this in mind, each pupil has filled an odd sock with a positive affirmation which resonates with them and can be used to support others when needed.

In Their Own Words: The Digital Lives of Schoolchildren (Internet Matters)

The latest Cybersurvey has been published by Internet Matters. This is the largest and most robust survey of its kind in the UK, with nearly 15,000 children aged 11-17 taking part in 82 schools across the country. In the latest report, the authors, have identified key themes from what young people say about their online lives. The study ran before COVID-19 began.

The report has highlighted that the numbers of children viewing harmful content online dramatically increased over a period of four years, between 2015 and 2019, with particular concern relating to body image, both for boys wanting to 'bulk up' and girls wanting picture-perfect bodies, or even worse anorexic or harmed bodies.

Key themes include:

- content risk is more commonly experienced than contact risk
- parents could talk more to their children about online life in general, rather than only when giving advice
- the gap widens between vulnerable and non-vulnerable teens
- cyberbullying remains stable at 22% of the total sample
- meetups are commonplace, 18% have done so
- sexting, desire, coercion and relationship norms
- online aggression is racist, homophobic, often gendered, and hate speech is common
- spending significant amounts of money in games
- too few of our teenagers are actively following the online safety advice they were taught
- the positive aspects of online life are enjoyed by all young people but appear much more important to already vulnerable teens than to their peers
- the influence of vloggers with a particular age group



The report can be found here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/about-us/in-their-own-words-2019-cybersurvey-research-report/>

Please be aware that pupils are taught about E-Safety as part of our PSHE programme. You can also find lots of information and advice about how parents can help to keep their children safe on our website: [E-Safety – Bright Sparks Learning Centre](#)

RSE Consultation

Thank you to parents who read and commented on our draft RSE policy during our consultation process. The RSE policy is now released and is available to view on the centre's website.

Website

Thank you for your patience whilst our website was being updated. Our new website is now live and can be found at www.brightsparkslearningcentre.co.uk. Please note that our safeguarding policies, such as Child Protection and Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, Anti-bullying, along with our Complaints Policy and Procedure are among policies which are available to download off the website. These, along with all other centre policies, are also available from the main office should you wish to request a copy.

GCSE Examinations (2021)

We understand that students preparing to take exams and assessments in 2021, and their parents, carers and teachers, are all concerned about the impact coronavirus (COVID-19) has had on their education.

Currently, the Education Minister Gavin Williams has insisted that GCSE and A-level examinations will go ahead in 2021 in England, but some examinations have been **moved back by three weeks** to allow for more teaching time, and with reduced content in some subjects.

We continue to monitor the situation closely and will keep you updated.

“A Mile a Day”

The school recognises the importance of daily exercise and the benefits for both our mental and physical health. As from Monday 23rd November, we will be aiming to complete a short 20-minute walk each day. With the change of the seasons, could you please ensure that your child has a warm winter coat each day along with suitable footwear. Pupils should wear their uniform which consists of black trousers or skirt, a white shirt and plain, black jumper.

On Wednesday mornings, we will complete an extended walk and combine this with outdoor learning with a focus on English, maths, science and physical fitness. Pupils are NOT required to wear uniform on Wednesday; however, please ensure that their clothing is suitable for a school / work place environment.

Covid-19

We are aware that cases of Covid-19 have started to increase in the locality. In order to maintain the safety of our pupils and staff we are observing the following procedures:

- a face covering will be worn when entering and leaving the building
- a face covering will be worn at all times when travelling to the centre on public transport or by private taxi
- hands will be washed on entrance to, and exit of, the building, and regularly throughout the day
- hands will be sanitised on entrance to, and exit of, each classroom
- pupils and staff will move around the building following the one-way system (this is clearly indicated by arrows and notices)
- pupils and staff will maintain a 2-metre distance (clearly indicated by tape on the floors)
- students will be seated at their allocated their own work-station / desk and will use their own personal resource box

I wanted to finish by sharing this quotation with you which was delivered by Captain AJ Tracey during a Remembrance Assembly in a Coventry School:

“Perhaps this is our world war and, perhaps, this is the time that we need to step up, to think of others first, to wear a mask without prompting, to wash hands without being nagged, to behave responsibly and socially distance because our actions make a difference for someone more vulnerable than us. I would like to think that the sacrifices we are being asked to make at the moment are small change compared to those who give their lives so that we can have those freedoms. As we remember all the fallen perhaps this is the time for us to be brave, make small sacrifices and show compassion for others.”

Captain A J Tracey; Remembrance 11.11.20

Claire Fyfe

Claire Fyfe

Principal